Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) An adjustable star wheel according to claim ~~1~~9, wherein ~~the~~ each rotatable finger is generally elongate radially with respect to the star wheel and its shaft is located at or towards an end closest to the central axis.

5. (Currently Amended) An adjustable star wheel according to claim ~~1~~9, further comprising a movable back plate operative to be moved substantially radially into and out from ~~the~~ each pocket.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) An adjustable star wheel according to Claim ~~6~~9, wherein neighbo~~u~~r fingers from adjacent pockets are mounted on their shafts in a crossed configuration.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) An adjustable star wheel ~~according to Claim 8~~ rotatable about a central axis, comprising a plurality of pockets distributed around the star wheel for receiving a container therein, each pocket being defined at least in part by a pair of opposed, spaced apart fingers, each finger providing a contact surface for contacting a container when received in its associated pocket and being rotatably mounted on respective shafts extending substantially parallel to the central axis so as to be rotatable in opposite senses within a range of

movement thereby adjusting the width of the pocket they define, the star wheel further comprising setting means operative to set the fingers in substantially any position within their range of movement, a toothed common drive means and wherein the fingers are provided with teeth, the common drive means and fingers being arranged with meshed teeth such that the fingers are rotatably driven by the common drive means, and wherein the teeth of one finger from each pair defining a pocket meshes with the teeth of the drive means in a rack and pinion arrangement.

10. (Currently Amended) An adjustable star wheel according to Claim 9, wherein the teeth of the finger meshed with the common drive means also mesh with the teeth of its neighbour finger from the adjacent pocket, every other finger around the star wheel meshing with the common drive means such that the common drive means drives each set of neighbour fingers in opposite sense.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Amended) An adjustable star wheel according to Claim 9, further comprising a thumb wheel attached to a shaft to which a cog wheel is also attached that engages with co-operating teeth of the common drive means.

14.-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) An adjustable star wheel rotatable about a central axis, comprising at least one pocket for receiving a container therein, and a pair of opposed, spaced apart fingers defining at least in part the pocket, each finger providing a contact surface for contacting a container when received in the pocket, wherein at least one of the fingers is rotatably mounted on a shaft extending substantially parallel to the central axis so as to be rotatable within a

range of movement thereby adjusting the width of the pocket, the star wheel further comprising setting means operative to set the rotatable finger in substantially any position within the range of movement~~according to claim 1~~, wherein each pocket is partially defined by a second pair of fingers like the first pair, the first and second pair of fingers being spaced apart in the axial direction.

20. (Original) An adjustable star wheel according to Claim 19, wherein pairs of fingers separated in the axial direction are mounted on a common shaft.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Original) An adjustable star wheel according to Claim 20, wherein the axially-separated pairs of fingers are mounted independently on the common shaft and are provided with separate drive means and separate setting means, thereby allowing independent adjustment and setting of the positions of each of the two sets of axially-separated fingers.

23. (Currently Amended) An adjustable star wheel rotatable about a central axis, comprising at least one pocket for receiving a container therein, and a pair of opposed, spaced apart fingers defining at least in part the pocket, each finger providing a contact surface for contacting a container when received in the pocket, wherein at least one of the fingers is rotatably mounted on a shaft extending substantially parallel to the central axis so as to be rotatable within a range of movement thereby adjusting the width of the pocket, the star wheel further comprising setting means operative to set the rotatable finger in substantially any position within the range of movement~~according to claim 1~~, wherein the at least one pocket is symmetrical about a center line corresponding to the radius of the star wheel and the pair of fingers comprise curved contact surfaces whose curvature extends away from the center line as the fingers extend away from the central axis.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) An adjustable star wheel according to Claim ~~6~~9, further comprising a moveable back plate operative to be moved substantially radially into and out from each pocket

26. (Original) An adjustable star wheel according to Claim 25, wherein the back plates are moveable by a further common drive means.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently Amended) An adjustable star wheel rotatable about a central axis, comprising a plurality of pockets distributed around the star wheel for receiving a container therein, each pocket being defined at least in part by a pair of opposed, spaced apart fingers, each finger providing a contact surface for contacting a container when received in its associated pocket and being rotatably mounted on respective shafts extending substantially parallel to the central axis so as to be rotatable in opposite senses within a range of movement thereby adjusting the width of the pocket they define, the star wheel further comprising setting means operative to set the fingers in substantially any position within their range of movement, a toothed common drive means and wherein the fingers are provided with teeth, the common drive means and fingers being arranged with meshed teeth such that the fingers are rotatably driven by the common drive means, ~~according to Claim 26~~, a plurality of moveable back plates operative to be moved substantially into and out from each pocket by a further common drive means, and wherein the further common drive means is an annular member and the back plates are mounted on substantially radially-extending members that overlap with the annular member, the overlapping portions being provided with a diagonally-extending slot and a post received therein such that rotation of the annular member causes radial movement of the back plates.

29.-58. (Canceled)

59. (Currently Amended) An adjustable star wheel rotatable about a central axis, comprising at least one pocket for receiving a container therein, and a pair of opposed, spaced apart fingers defining at least in part the pocket, each finger providing a contact surface for contacting a container when received in the pocket, wherein at least one of the fingers is rotatably mounted on a shaft extending substantially parallel to the central axis so as to be rotatable within a range of movement thereby adjusting the width of the pocket, the star wheel further comprising setting means operative to set the rotatable finger in substantially any position within the range of movement~~according to claim 1,~~; and ~~further comprising~~ a guide rail assembly comprising a guide rail that defines the perimeter of a path of a container when conveyed along part of an automated handling line, the path and hence the perimeter being arcuate about a center and positioned at a radius from the center, wherein the guide rail is movable radially to define the perimeter at a plurality of different radii from substantially the same center.

60. (Original) A star wheel conveyor according to Claim 59, wherein the guide rail comprises at least two segments, a first segment being driveable in a substantially radial direction and a second segment being connected to the first segment by a link such that the second segment follows movement of the first segment.

61. (Original) A star wheel conveyor according to Claim 60, wherein the second segment is constrained to move radially by guide means.

62. (Original) A star wheel conveyor according to Claim 61, wherein the guide means comprises a post received within a slot, the slot being elongated radially.

63. (Canceled)

64. (Canceled)

65. (Previously Amended) A star wheel conveyor according to Claim 59, wherein the first and second segments are arranged in superposition to overlap and are provided with a slideable link between overlapping portions to allow the separation of the first and second segments to decrease and increase as the segments move inwardly and outwardly.

66. (Previously Amended) A star wheel conveyor according to Claim 65, wherein the slideable link comprises a post received within a circumferentially elongate slot.

67.-70. (Canceled)

71. (Previously Amended) A star wheel conveyor according to Claim 59, further comprising a clamping mechanism operable to clamp the guide rail in position.

72. (Canceled)

73. (Previously Amended) A star wheel conveyor according to Claim 59, further comprising a position indicator and a scale, wherein one of the position indicator or scale is fastened to the guide rail to move therewith and the other is fixed in position.

74. (Previously Amended) A star wheel conveyor according to Claim 60, further comprising a third segment wherein the third and second segments are configured to correspond to the first and second segments.

75.-77. (Canceled)

78. (Previously Amended) A star wheel conveyor according to Claim 59, further comprising a second like guide rail wherein the second guide rail is moveable independently of the first guide rail.

79.-81. (Canceled)

82. (Previously Amended) A star wheel conveyor according to Claim 59, further comprising a second, like guide rail assembly arranged back to back with the first guide rail assembly.

83.-87. (Canceled)